

# Manx Notes 131 (2012)

CRESSY DODD

AN UNRECOGNISED MANX SONG COLLECTOR \*

“I am so sorry I forgot to send you the song or jig. I was divided between leaving it for Amy to take down ‘to you’ and taking it here to send by post, and finally decided on the latter course, thinking I could explain better myself. I put it with my papers & its still at the bottom of my box, though I’ve thought of it several times, only to forget again.”<sup>1</sup> So wrote Cressy Maud Dodd (1887–?) to Sophia Morrison in 1910.

She had been collecting from a “Mr Moore” in Patrick. This must be Joseph Patrick Moore (1845–1928) who is mentioned in *Mannin* 2 (1913): “A very successful Manx supper was given in the Palace Restaurant, Douglas, on 7th April [1913], by a few friends of the Manx Language Society. Speeches, songs, and to a certain extent, conversation, were all in Manx. Mr Joseph Moore, Patrick, sang a traditional song never before published. We hope to publish this song in the second number of *Mannin*.”<sup>2</sup> He was a seasonal fisherman when not a farmer and lived in the house next to Knockaloe Moar Primitive Methodist chapel. He spoke both Manx and English. He was later to be mentioned in the “Preface” to Morrison’s own *Manx Fairy Tales* (1911).<sup>3</sup>

What though did Cressy Dodd record from him? She collected four songs (likely only the tunes), namely (1) [“The Wind that shakes the Barley”] (×2) (Roud 2994). “Mr Moore gave me two renderings, so I have taken down both,—the first is the one he sung oftenest”; (2) Untitled lullaby, first line, “Where’s your father, diddle-dum, diddle-dum”; (3) Untitled, “a skit on some man who burnt someone’s haystacks I think.” This material is now unlocated; it not amongst the Morrison Papers in the MNHL.

*The Vocabulary of the Anglo-Manx Dialect* (1924) has the fuller text of the lullaby though here with a different first line, added to likely turn it into a skit on someone:

“She fathered the child on him and had to go to Coort to sweer it.

Where’s yer father, diddledum, diddledum?

Out in the garden, diddledum dee.

Shall I go for him, diddledum, diddledum?”

Navar ye’ll find him, diddledum dee.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cressy M. Dodd to Sophia Morrison, 26 April 1910, MNHL, MS 09495, Box 5.

<sup>2</sup> Anon, “Notes,” *Mannin* 1 (1913): 55.

<sup>3</sup> Sophia Morrison, “Preface,” *Manx Fairy Tales* (London: David Nutt, 1911) 5.

<sup>4</sup> See entry for “Father,” in A.W. Moore, *et al.*, eds., *A Vocabulary of the Anglo-Manx Dialect* (London: Oxford University Press, 1924) 60.

The 1911 census shows her living in Birmingham, in Small Heath and working as a certified assistant teacher for Birmingham Council and aged twenty-three.<sup>5</sup> She was also interested in learning folk dancing, mentioning that “I am attending a class at present where we learn Irish & Scotch steps, & reels; they also are rather attractive. Otherwise I’m afraid I know of nothing new.”<sup>6</sup> She was one of the many enthused by the Pan Celtic cause—collecting folk songs in the Island and learning Irish and Scottish folk dancing in Birmingham. The 1901 census sees her aged thirteen and living in Peel on Marine Parade with the rest of her family (this included her sister Amy who is mentioned in the letter). The household spoke English only.<sup>7</sup>

Evidently, though, Cressy was homesick for the Island: “By the way I’ve not thanked you for your kind thought in sending me the ‘knobs,’—though I’ve been chewing all the time. It was good of you to send them & they are good, (our girls here have sampled them & think the same) thank you so much.”<sup>8</sup>

Does anyone have any further details of this unrecognised Manx song collector?

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REFERENCES CITED

- Anon. “Notes.” *Mannin* 1 (1913): 53–56.  
 Moore, A.W., Sophia Morrison, and Edmund Goodwin, eds. *A Vocabulary of the Anglo-Manx Dialect*. London: Oxford University Press, 1924.  
 Morrison, Sophia. “Preface.” *Manx Fairy Tales*. London: David Nutt, 1911. iii–v.




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<sup>5</sup> Census of England and Wales, 1911, PRO, RG/14 PN 18213, 255. I am grateful to Keith Chandler for this reference.  
<sup>6</sup> Cressy M. Dodd to Sophia Morrison, 26 April 1910, MNHL, MS 09495, Box 5.  
<sup>7</sup> *Census Enumerators’ Book* for Peel 1901, PRO, RG 13/5306, fol. 8, sch. 54.  
<sup>8</sup> Cressy M. Dodd to Sophia Morrison, 26 April 1910, MNHL, MS 09495, Box 5.